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ABSTRACT

This handbook presents guidelines and the rationale for creating a school violence committee. The committee is composed of Washington Education Association (WEA) members and addresses issues related to school safety. The committee defines the problem, sets goals for reaching solutions, and implements an action plan. Members may also review contract language related to student violence, discipline, and safe working conditions; review school district policy about school employees' role in crisis situations; organize workshops; and conduct a district survey. Suggestions are offered for involving the community, working with the media and juvenile justice system, and engaging in political action efforts. Appendices contain a sample crisis plan, the WEA task force school crisis development process (1993-94), a community support list, a media support list and sample news release, and classifications of crisis situations. (LMI)

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# Creating A School Violence Committee

## *The WEA Local Leader's Handbook*

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The purpose of this handbook is to provide local association leaders with a systematic approach for dealing with school violence. Included is a guide for development of an association school violence committee and a process for attaining the committee's goals through member and community involvement. Also included are suggestions for gaining access to the decision makers in your juvenile justice system and steps you can take to impact judicial elections.

Reducing and eliminating school violence is of critical importance to school employees and students. Development of an active school violence committee will provide members with an opportunity to become more involved in the local association. Working together to improve working conditions and learning conditions will strengthen the Association as well as its relationship with the community.

***Handbook written by***
***Pam McClain, Mid-State UniServ Council***
***Jeff Wahlquist, WEA Staff***

***Produced by the Washington Education Association • For further information, call or write:***

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**April 1994**

# Creating A School Violence Committee

***The WEA Local Leader's Handbook***

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## What is a School Violence Committee?

Like other association committees, the school violence committee is made up of association members. The school violence committee will address the issues related to school safety. Committee members define the problem, set goals to reach possible solutions, and implement an action plan to achieve their goals.

## Why Should Our Association Have a School Violence Committee?

As a local leader, you have many duties and responsibilities. In the past, one person may have been able to do much of the local association work. However, our work as school employees has become more complex and time-consuming. New issues, such as violence in the workplace, must be addressed. A school violence committee developed by the local education association is an extremely effective way to improve working conditions for school employees and learning conditions for students. This committee works to achieve goals which will make schools safer for us all.

## How Do I Develop a School Violence Committee?

Charges must be developed for the committee. Association members could submit ideas for charges, and your UniServ staff would be an excellent resource as you formulate committee charges. A list of charges from a Louisiana local association is attached. (see Addendum A)

***Suggested committee charges:***

- The school violence committee (SVC) will review contract language related to student violence, discipline, and safe working conditions. Recommendations will be made to the local association president and bargaining chairperson.

- School district policy regarding the employee's role when confronted with a violent situation shall be reviewed and provided to all members. Recommendations regarding a change of policy shall be made to the local president.

- The committee will create and distribute a survey to all members, focusing on violence in the workplace. Results will be forwarded to the local president, along with recommendations for dealing with specific issues raised in survey responses.

- The SVC will meet with local UniServ staff to organize a workshop to address issues raised by survey respondents. Training in conflict and anger management, as well as employee rights, student discipline, and stress reduction are possible areas of concern.

An important component of the SVC's work is the member survey. UniServ staff and the WEA Research Division can assist in formulating the survey. Analysis of survey results will give the committee a look at the extent of student violence in your school district. It will also give the committee specific information regarding which group(s) of employees are most likely to be confronted by violent student behavior, the extent of the student violence problem at every grade level, and the type of training employees have received in such areas as self-defense, conflict management, etc.

## How Do We Use the Results of Our Student Violence Survey?

Survey results should be shared with members of your local. The members of the SVC, with input from members at-large, could offer recommendations to the school board. Such recommendations may include:

- Development of a district anti-violence committee which would include parents, students, administrators, school security personnel, and association members

- Installation of metal detectors, removal of lockers, installation of fences

- Hiring security personnel

- Opening an alternative school for violent and disruptive students

- Development of a school crisis management plan at each building in the district. (see Addendum B)

- Development of anger management, alternative resolution, and/or counseling programs for students who have exhibited assaultive behaviors or been in possession of weapons.

## How Can We Get the Community Involved?

The association can use material from the survey to launch several types of community action:

* Present survey results to the community in a series of meetings held in classrooms, members' homes, etc.

* Survey the community, (and/or get names from meetings mentioned above), to build a list of potential groups and persons who have the same interest as the association in assuring safe schools.

* Organize your list of allies within the community. (see Addendum C) Community allies may include the PTA Council; school-based PTA's or PTO's, school/sport booster clubs; religious leaders/groups; law enforcement, including DARE officer(s); social service agencies; people who work with juvenile offenders, such as juvenile court administrators, parole officers, and judges; labor groups; business groups; county/city government; retirement organizations; and real estate groups.

## How Can We Work With the Media to Promote Safer Schools?

Your community news media can and should play a major role in organizing your community around the issues of safe and secure schools. You have to make it happen, though. You must build an ongoing and honest relationship between the association and your local news media.

The following suggestions may be helpful as you build a relationship with the media:

* Compile a media list (see Addendum D) and keep it updated. Get to know key reporters, editors, news directors, and assignment editors. Make sure they know you!

* Become a reliable and important source of school-related news. Long before any crisis starts, make yourself known as a reliable and accurate source of information. (See Addendum E for a sample news release).

* Learn to be succinct in answering reporters' questions. Keep it simple and focused.

* Know who to call in the local media to get a story into the news.

(For further information on working with the community, school board, and media, see WEA's Preventing and Coping with School Violence, A Resource Manual for Washington School Employees.)

## Where Does the Juvenile Justice System Fit Into Our School Violence Committee's Work?

Gaining access to your local juvenile justice system's decision makers is an important charge for the association SVC. A process for approaching this task may include "mapping" the juvenile justice system in your county.

* Prepare a list of questions to identify who decides how juveniles will be treated if they are accused of a crime, diverted, adjudicated, or assigned to or released from a juvenile detention facility.

* Use members' community networks and the telephone book to get names, titles, and telephone numbers of individuals who work with juvenile offenders. Such a list may include the county prosecutor's office, juvenile division; juvenile court administrator; juvenile court commissioners (judges); superior court judges; law enforcement; and parole officers.

* Questions may include:

  - Who decides if a complaint filed against a student leads to actual charges being filed?

  - Who decides whether the juvenile's case is diverted or adjudicated?

  - Who writes diversion agreements, court orders, and release orders?

  - Can school personnel have input into court orders?

  - Does the local juvenile justice system include a process for communicating with school officials when students are involved in violent crime?

Once the juvenile justice system is mapped, the association must communicate to the system's decision makers how the association and the juvenile authorities can work together to fight school violence.

Suggestions include:

* Diversion orders and release from detention orders could include behavior standards for the juvenile while he/she attends school. The orders should also include consequences in the juvenile justice system if the standards are not obeyed.

* Educators may want to share educational and behavioral information regarding accused students with the juvenile authorities before the authorities make any decisions regarding diversion, adjudication, or placement of the students.

* Educators may want to obtain information about adjudicated and diverted juveniles from the juvenile justice system before the juvenile returns to the school environment.

## The Association, School Violence, and Juvenile Offenders

Juvenile crime is reaching epidemic proportions in our communities. Obviously, our schools and work sites are becoming just as violent. As more of our students go through the juvenile justice system, and as more of our members are confronted with violence in the workplace, it is important that we know how juveniles are treated as they go through the juvenile justice system.

The association SVC should track the records of those judges and court commissioners who hear cases involving juvenile offenders. Are judges holding juveniles to consequences the association deems appropriate?

If your association SVC feels that court records indicate an unwillingness by individual juvenile court commissioners or judges to administer appropriate consequences to juvenile offenders, a remedy can be pursued by the association. All judges and court commissioners must be elected. Our members are very politically active, and should become involved in judicial races as well as other, more traditional, political races.

Your UniServ staff is well trained in political action activities, and is an excellent resource as your Association prepares to elect more responsive judges. Appoint a team to be trained and to lead the organizing effort you are undertaking. With school violence as the issue, members will see the relationship between their association, their community, safe working conditions, and political action.

Addendum A

## Sample Crisis Plan

The Crisis Management Team for Smith High School has developed the following crisis plan. Staff, parents, students, and community members shared in the development process, and have approved the plan as well as the recommendations regarding staff training.

1. Smith High School designated security personnel and supervisory personnel will make up the Rapid Response Crisis Team, (RRCT). It is recommended that all members of the RRCT receive training in conflict and anger management techniques, negotiation techniques, proper restraint techniques, first-aid and CPR, and self-defense techniques. Other training as deemed necessary by the RRCT shall be provided by the school district.

2. Members of the RRCT. will receive the following supplies and equipment: vehicle, radio link between vehicles and school administrators' offices, and local police department. They shall also be provided with a portable telephone, beeper, armband identifying them as RRCT members, and other supplies as requested by the Team.

3. All members of the RRCT will take part in drills, meetings, and training sessions. Training and meetings will take place during the work day and substitutes will be provided by the District.

4. A code has been developed which will alert the RRCT of a crisis situation. The team developed this code, and is responsible for necessary changes. The building principal is responsible for disseminating pertinent information to the entire staff of Smith.

5. In a crisis situation, all staff will be notified through the PA system. If for some reason this system is not functional, notification will be made through the building telephone system and computer systems. The code developed by the RRCT will be used at this time.

6. The following crisis situations have been assigned code names and/or numbers: student/adult with a gun; student/adult with a weapon other than a gun; gang violence in progress; drive-by shooting; staff member confronted by violent student(s) with a weapon; staff member confronted by a violent student(s), no visible weapon.

7. All crisis situations will be assigned a specific code name. The number following the name will alert the staff and RRCT of the location of the situation. Police will be notified immediately by building administrators. If necessary, a designated member of the RRCT will notify law enforcement officers.

The WEA encourages all local leaders to use a site-based approach to development of a crisis plan. All buildings and communities have differing needs which should be addressed at the building level by Association members, other school employees, administrators and other supervisors, parents, students, law enforcement personnel, and community members.

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# WEA TASK FORCE 1993-1994
# SCHOOL CRISIS DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

## Why do schools' need a crisis management plan?

- Violence in the schools
  - -Student violence for the sake of violence. (Amoral)
  - -Failure of students to resolve conflict.
  - -Student inability to deal with conflict.
  - -Lack of tools/skills to manage conflicts causes students to escalate to violence.
- School sanctions (Suspensions, expulsions, etc.) don't deter violence.
- Juvenile system is antiquated and overpopulated.
- Students need more affective development.
- Legal liability.
- Potential or presence of gang activity.
- Proactive means are effective.
- Pre-planning with steps and procedures creates sense of control.
- School recognizes need for a crisis plan (Institutional readiness).

## How is a crisis management plan developed?

- Gather information dealing with violence and safety through:
  - -Conferences
  - -Workshops
  - -Other districts' policies
  - -Local law enforcement agencies
  - -Publications
- Staff reviews information.
- Take information and design a policy to meet school's needs.
- Share rough draft of policy with staff, parent associations, community, administrative office, local Education Association, etc.

Addendum C

**School Violence**
**Community Support List**

| Group | Leader/Contact | Phone | FAX | Address | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PTA Council | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| School PTA's or PTO's | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| School/Sport Booster Clubs | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Religious Leaders | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Law Enforcement | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

**School Violence**
**Community Support List**

| Group | Leader/Contact | Phone | FAX | Address | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County Government | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| City Governments | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Youth Groups | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Labor Unions | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Business Groups | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

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Addendum D

## Media List

| MEDIA | NEWS CONTACT | ADDRESS | PHONE | FAX |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Television:

Radio:

Newspaper:

Wire Services:

Washington Education Association
33434 Eighth Avenue South
Federal Way, WA 98003
941-6700 or 1-800-622-3393
Fax 206-946-4735

Addendum E

**Sample News Release**

Upriver Education Association
123 Main Street
Upriver, WA 98000

News Release
For immediate release
March 1, 1994

For further information, call:
Lisa Smith, president
Telephone: (206) 123-4567

**Teachers, PTA call for strict ban of weapons at schools**

In the wake of Thursday's near-fatal shooting at Upriver High School, Upriver Education Association (UEA) President Lisa Smith and PTA Council President Dave Roberts today called upon the school board to adopt stronger policies to ensure "weapon-free schools."

"We must assure parents that their children and their children's teachers can be free from the threat of violence in Upriver's schools," said their joint statement.

Specifically, the groups are demanding:

1. A strict policy banning all weapons on school premises except those carried by authorized law enforcement personnel.

2. Measures such as security guards and/or metal detectors to screen out weapons.

3. The immediate suspension of any student caught bringing to school a gun, knife or other object which could cause bodily harm.

"We need," continued their statement, "a zero-tolerance policy on any weapons in our schools".

-more-

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According to the spokespersons, when one student brings a weapon to school, others in turn feel compelled to do the same. "The problem of weapons in our schools poses an immediate threat to the safety and welfare of students and teachers. We need measures now which bring an immediate halt to any weapons in our schools".

The UEA represents 455 teachers and other certificated personnel and the PTA has a local membership of over 4,100 parents and teachers.

-###-

Addendum F

## Ideas from Louisiana

A district-wide anti-violence committee was established at the request of the East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators (an NEA affiliate), to address violence issues. Results of that committee's work are outlined below. These ideas may be useful to your local:

1. Security personnel increased by two. Vehicles with communication radios, telephones, metal detectors, beepers, etc., were provided.

2. Implementation of a policy to reimburse employees up to $250 for vandalism of personal property on school property.

3. Established an on-site school security committee in each school.

4. Recommended that see-through book bags be purchased, lockers taken out of all middle and high schools and two sets of all books be purchased: one set going to student on first day of school to stay at home, and one set to stay in classroom.

5. Recommended development of a Rapid Response Security Team (RRST) which reports directly to Deputy Superintendent. RRST is available during the school day. Responds to building administrator's call for assistance in cases of gang activities, criminal investigations, weapons, narcotics, assaults, fights, demonstrations, irate hostile visitors, racial tensions, etc. RRST will also monitor transfer points and school bus routes. Coverage scheduled for 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

6. Already in place: "Security Dads Program." Twenty-four dads participating at one high school. Not a security force, "their strongest weapon is their mouths." Seen at all school functions. Wear shirt and hat with Security Dads logo.

7. Seeking grants to work with different agencies and social service groups.

8. Recommendation: Alternative school at middle school level; 4-5 discipline centers to house students who have been suspended 2-5 days, with principal's referral; alternative elementary school.

Additionally, the East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators provided these ideas:

1. Recommendations from EA include:

A. All adults coming on campus sign in (current policy).

B. Each visitor will be issued a badge by the school office.

C. Any visitor without a badge must be reported to the office by school personnel.

D. Disruptive adults visiting campus must leave or police will be called.

E. Police protection if a school experiences more than one incident of theft or threats of bodily harm in a one-month period.

F. Police will check schools that are located in high-crime areas once per hour, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

G. Armed security at after-hours/evening school functions if school is in high-crime area.

2. Survey all members of local association.

3. Survey results shared with public via a press release. Recommendation made: alternative schools at all levels for students with discipline problems (suspensions/expulsions).

4. Association formed a task force composed of members and non-members to work on programs and practical solutions to deal with discipline problems in schools. Association also established a discipline hot line to be used by teachers to get help with on-going discipline problems. The Association also mentioned plans to form coalitions with parents and business community; to offer parent workshops regarding discipline at home; and to publish a periodic summary of what is happening in the schools regarding discipline.

5. The Association will also offer cash grants to teachers who come up with innovative ideas on how to deal with discipline problems.

6. The Association also held a public forum with elected officials and community members, teachers, etc., to deal with student discipline issue.

Copies of information/sample survey/presentations/etc., prepared by the East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators may be obtained by contacting your UniServ office.

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# LEVEL 1

**A Life Threatening Emergency that requires specific action to ensure the safety of staff and students. Known Weapons where there is imminent physical danger.**

**Examples:**

A. Armed person in classroom or hallway. Imminent Harm to themselves or others Hostage Situation.

B. Death/Serious Injury on Campus unknown causes (known cause to Level II)

**SIGNAL:** Continuous Bell - 10 Seconds, followed by 3 short blasts. (The "old train whistle" signal)

**RESPONSE:** IN CLASS

1. Ask students to remain seated in classroom and stand by for further information.
2. "Quick-Look" check of hallway for passing students. Direct those students into your room.
3. Lock all doors (do not open for anyone).
4. Paper over windows.
5. Close blinds.
6. Wait for further announcement (all clear signal).
7. Report by phone if medical assistance is needed.
8. If you observe a non-student (trespasser) or a perceived dangerous person, use the interschool phone and report the:
   a. location
   b. description (numbers)
   c. direction headed
   d. possession of a weapon i.e. gun, knife, or etc.***
9. DO NOT use the phone unless you need medical assistance or have information.
10. These conditions remain in effect until the "ALL CLEAR" signal sounded. This will be a Long, Continuous Bell. (like the end of a fire drill)
11. As soon as possible, we will debrief the entire staff as to the status of the situation, our response and plans for continued /additional response if necessary. (Classroom discussion, extra counselors, etc. (We may videotape a statement and use our in-school TV Channel 3 for this communication or send a statement to each room by runner.)

*** NO STUDENT OR TEACHER OR STAFF MEMBER is to confront a trespasser during a Level 1 situation!



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RESPONSE: OUT OF CLASS (lunch, cons, passing time)

1. Upon Signal
2. Faculty, staff, students, go directly to nearest room where space is available.
3. Follow Steps 2-11 above.

## CRISIS TEAM RESPONSE
## LEVEL 1 CRISIS

1. Convene Crisis Decision Team in Principal's office (Administrators, Counselors, Margaret, Don, Joyce and Maude)
2. Crisis Security Team takes positions to: A. Assist anyone not aware of the crisis or failing to respond to the instructions to move into the nearest room where space is available (the auditorium will be opened). B. Stay in contact with and assist the Crisis Decision Team with the latest information available regarding the crisis their vantage point.
3. Crisis Decision Team will define and confirm situation.
4. Contact Authorities if applicable:
   a. 911 b. Police desk c. Dr. Livingston's Office
   d. Fire Dept. e. District Security f. 881 Communications
5. Develop plan to reduce danger to students and staff.
6. Secure the area class or individual.
7. When incident is concluded:
   A. Debrief Crisis Team
   B. Prepare Statement for media or refer all calls to Communications Department
   C. Contact Parents of students involved or injured
   D. Debrief staff member(s) where situation occurred
   E. Debrief class(es)
   F. Memo to All staff to be read to students before the end of the day
   G. Emergency faculty meeting

Also to consider:

1. Family of student/staff involved in the situation
2. Support Services for students/staff
3. Media--All calls directed to one person (agreed upon statement)
4. Crisis Team meets to evaluate response/process/improve plan


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# LEVEL II

A serious situation that requires specific action to ensure the safety of staff and students.

Examples:

A. Gun in locker
B. Gun/weapon in classroom (not displayed)
C. Student/teacher death (cause has been determined - no physical danger to others present
D. Bomb threat ( see Bomb threat Instructions pages for specific instructions

1. Convene Crisis Team members in Principal's Office or other designated location (Margaret or Sharon will know if alternative meeting site is chosen).

2. Determine Response Plan and Specific Procedures - plan to minimize danger to students and staff. Also to minimize panic and/or alarm.

3. Define/confirm the emergency.

4. Secure the area. Keep students away from affected area.

5. Contact appropriate agencies as deemed necessary:
a. 911 b. Police Desk c. Dr. Livingston's Office

d. Fire Dept. e. District Security f. 981 Communications

6. When incident is over, debrief the Team. Create written apptopriate response for communication purposes.

7. Debrief affected Staff and Students.

8. When appropriate, prepare Level II memo for all staff to read to students.

9. Debrief Team when incident is ended.

10. Review incident and plan for effectiveness.

# LEVEL III

A Conflict Resolution Situation requiring specific actions to ensure the safety/security of staff and students with minimal disruption to the educational process.

Examples:

A. Student fights on campus
B. Non-students in building - Trespassers
C. Bomb threat - Refer to Faculty Handbook for your responsibilities in this situation
D. Illegal and/or intimidating activities
E. Pervert on campus
F. Can of mace on campus
G. After school fight on campus

1. Upon notification to Main Office an administrator or designee will be informed and move towards the situation.

2. Conflict Management Team Members in locale of incident/concern for safety/security will be notified. They will assist in resolution of the conflict.

3. Conflict Management Team Members by location are:

Third floor - Kathy Harrison, Eric Nagi, Karen MacDonald
Second floor - Sandi MacQuinn, Clay Swisher, Peter Perkins
First floor - All counselors, Georgia Miller, Matt Moran
Back Hallway/PE - Dave Jewett, Dave Carson
Annex - Gary Neal, Ken Pelo

4. If appropriate, Support Agencies will be called:

a. District Security
b. Police

5. Impose disciplinary sanctions on students involved.

6. Debrief Team when incident is ended.

7. Review incident and plan for effectiveness.



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# LEVEL IV

**A Serious Situation/Tragedy/Loss in the Rogers Community (Staff, Students, our Rogers Community) which will impact our lives and our participation in the educational process.**

**Examples:**

A. Suicide on campus
B. Suicide off campus
C. Tragic event off campus involving Rogers staff or students

1. Communicate through Phone Tree (starts with Wallace Williams).
   a. Crisis Team is contacted
   b. Contact Faculty/Staff/Office Personnel, custodians, Instructional Assistants, cafeteria personnel, Business Office, Support Staff
   c. Other contacts may include:
      Booster Club President
      Parent Advisory
      Hugh Davis, District #81 Communications Office

2. Crisis Team meets as soon as possible or at 6:00 A.M. the next morning in Wallace's Office.
   a. Develop plan to respond to the tragedy, meet the needs of students/staff
   b. Create written appropriate response to any inquiring calls

3. Faculty meets at 7:30 A.M. in the Choir room.
   a. Faculty Responsibilities in classes (Sheet of suggested in class activities)
   b. Guidance counselor responsibilities to provide support/comfort to staff/students

4. Crisis Team meets 6th period to evaluate situation - determine additional response.

5. When appropriate - Faculty meeting at end of day - Notification by bulletin to all staff in their boxes. (Process/Support/Closure)

6. When appropriate, Crisis Team meets to debrief, evaluate response, adjust plan to improve effectiveness.



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